

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-11 ISO-00 CEQ-02 USIA-15 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01 EPA -04 /062 W

* ----- 059489

P R 231122Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WAVSHDC PRIORITY 9200

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 1123

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, IN

SUBJECT: VISIT OF JOHN A BUSTERUD, MEMBER, COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (CEQ)

REF: STATE 13051, 782, 243084, NEW DELHI 14576, USIA 23182,

22942, 22638, MANILA 3188, NEW DELHI 13408, *USIA 21518

1. EMBASSY BRIEFING WITH SCIATT AND DYSCIATT SET FOR 9 AM JANUARY 31.

2. APPOINTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE WITH OFFICIALS IN COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR) AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOR JANUARY 31. DR. ASHOK KHOSLA, WHO IS KEY INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO UNEP WILL NOT BE IN COUNTRY.

3. FEBRUARY 1, HAS BEEN SET ASIDE FOR VISIT TO AGRA FOR MR. AND MRS. BUSTERUD.

4. RESERVATIONS FOR JANUARY 31- FEBRUARY 1 CONFIRMED AT ASHOKA HOTEL.

5. EMBASSY TRANSPORT WILL MEET AT AIRPORT ON ARRIVAL.

6. THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF DELINEATION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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INDIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND POLICIES AND PRIORITY RESEARCH

AREAS:

1. PRIOR TO THE UN STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN JUNE 1972, INDIA HAD HIGH HOPES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF CONTROL AND FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON WORLD WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. A NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN FEBRUARY 1972 AND INAUGURATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN APRIL 1972 WITH BROAD GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING AND IMPROVING HUMAN ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTRY, AND TO ESTABLISH NEW POLICIES AND PROGRAMS. DURING THIS PERIOD A NUMBER OF APPROACH PAPERS WERE PREPARED FOR THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE. A HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION WAS SENT TO THE CONFERENCE, HEADED BY C. SUBRAMANIAN, THEN PLANNING MINISTER AS WELL AS MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ASSISTED BY KARAN SINGH, MINISTER FOR TOURISM (NOW MINISTER FOR HEALTH) AND I.K. GUJRAL, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND THE LATE PITAMBAR PANT WHO HAD BEEN NAMED CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION (NCEPC).

2. DURING THE PAST YEAR HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A DIMINISHING INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE GOI IN ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS. A PRIMARY CAUSE OF THIS DISINTEREST WAS THE TRAGIC DEATH OF PITAMBAR PANT LAST FEBRUARY. PANT WAS THE SPARKPLUG OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM AND ENJOYED THE CONFIDENCE AND TRUST OF THE PRIME MINISTER AS WELL AS MANY HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT.

A NEW CHAIRMAN HAS NOT YET BEEN APPOINTED. ANOTHER CAUSE FOR THE PRESENT LACK OF INTEREST IS THAT THE ENORMOUS INFLATIONARY AND OTHER ECONOMIC PROBLEMS HAVE FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE AND CUT MANY NEW AND ONGOING PROGRAMS NOT CONSIDERED OF HIGH PRIORITY AND TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL CUTS IN THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS SAID "GROWTH FIRST POLLUTION LATER." ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS WE BELIEVE, HAVE SUFFERED MORE THAN MOST.

3. IN LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT, BOTH AIR POLLUTION AND WATER POLLUTION BILLS ARE BEING FRAMED BY THE PARLIAMENT. THE WATER BILL WAS TAKEN UP BY THE RAJYA SABHA DURING THIS WINTER SESSION AND UNCLASSIFIED

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PASSED.
THE AIR POLLUTION BILL WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO. THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATIONS ACT 1951, IS ALSO BEING AMENDED TO ENSURE THAT THE DISCHARGE OF EFFLUENTS AND CASES INTO AIR, WATER AND LAND DOES NOT EXCEED SAFETY LIMITS.

4. IN REGARD TO US-INDO COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS,

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTERS IN INDIA ARE EAGER TO COLLABORATE WITH THE US ON RESEARCH PROJECTS AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND SCIENTISTS. SEVERAL SCIENTISTS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) HAVE VISITED INDIA DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE COOPERATION. A NUMBER OF JOINT ACTIVITIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN INITIATED SUCH AS THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND MICROFILM REPORTS FROM THE US ON DOCUMENTS RELATED TO POLLUTION CONTROL LAWS AND PERTINENT REPORTS FROM INDIA. THE MOST INTERESTING FIELD FOR JOINT RESEARCH EFFORTS SEEMS TO BE IN WATER RESEARCH AND GROUND WATER POLLUTION. THE PRIMARY INSTITUTE IN INDIA FOR COLLABORATION IN THIS FIELD IS CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE, NAGPUR.

5. THE INDIAN "SAVE THE TIGER" PROGRAM WAS INITIATED APRIL 1973 IN CORBETT PARK BUT HAS NOT PROGRESSED VERY FAR. SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SCIENTIFIC VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NEWDE01123
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740122/aaaaatzi.tel
Line Count: 131
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SCI
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 13051, 782, 243084, NEW DELHI, 14576, USIA 23182
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 FEB 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 FEB 2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <21-Nov-2002 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF JOHN A BUSTERUD, MEMBER, COUNCIL ON ENVIRON- MENTAL QUALITY (CEQ)
TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, IN, (BUSTERUD, JOHN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005